Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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“Not as people see does God see, because people see appearances, but the Lord looks into the heart” (1 Sam 16:7).

Fourth Sunday of Lent

1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ps 23; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41

Creation begins with God’s word, “Let there be light.” Light is what enables us to see, but only God can give deeper sight, beyond surface appearance.

In today's first reading, the Prophet Samuel passes by all of the impressive looking sons of Jesse to find David, the youngest son who is out watching the sheep. As soon as he is anointed, the Spirit “rushes” upon David.

Today’s gospel account of the healing of the man born blind reveals Jesus as “the light of the world.” This part of John’s Gospel is called the “Book of Signs” because as Jesus proceeds with his ministry, he declares that he is the divine I AM, the name God revealed to Moses from the burning bush. “I am the living water, I am the light of the world, I am the bread of life, I am the resurrection and the life.”

Each sign brings believers closer to the moment of glory on the cross, when faith enables them to see more than a crucified man. They see the deeper meaning of the event as the Son of Man is being lifted up and revealed as God’s Holy One.

Lent is our journey deeper into the mystery of Jesus. Only faith can enable us to see the light. Without it, we remain blind even if we have human sight. Jesus’ critics question the blind man and mock his claims to have been healed by Jesus, because they remain blind to the reality before their eyes. A man born blind now sees. The New Creation has begun in him through Jesus, the divine I AM, who is the “Light of the World.”

Perhaps the most basic prayer we can pray is that of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52), another blind man Jesus meets on the road leaving Jericho. When Jesus asks him, “What do you want me to do for you?" he immediately replies, “Lord I want to see!”

If we can see, we will walk in the light, we will grasp the truth, we will distinguish between appearance and what is in the heart, we will recognize the face of Jesus in the world, looking back at us with love. In his gaze, we are recreated and our true self -- the Christ in us -- is called forth.

This is the purpose of our lives, to become fully the person God has called into existence, named and loved. This is who we are and will be in eternity, so now is the time to open our hearts and our eyes to the face of God, the light of the world.